

PRATHAM BOOKS
A Book in Every Child's Hand

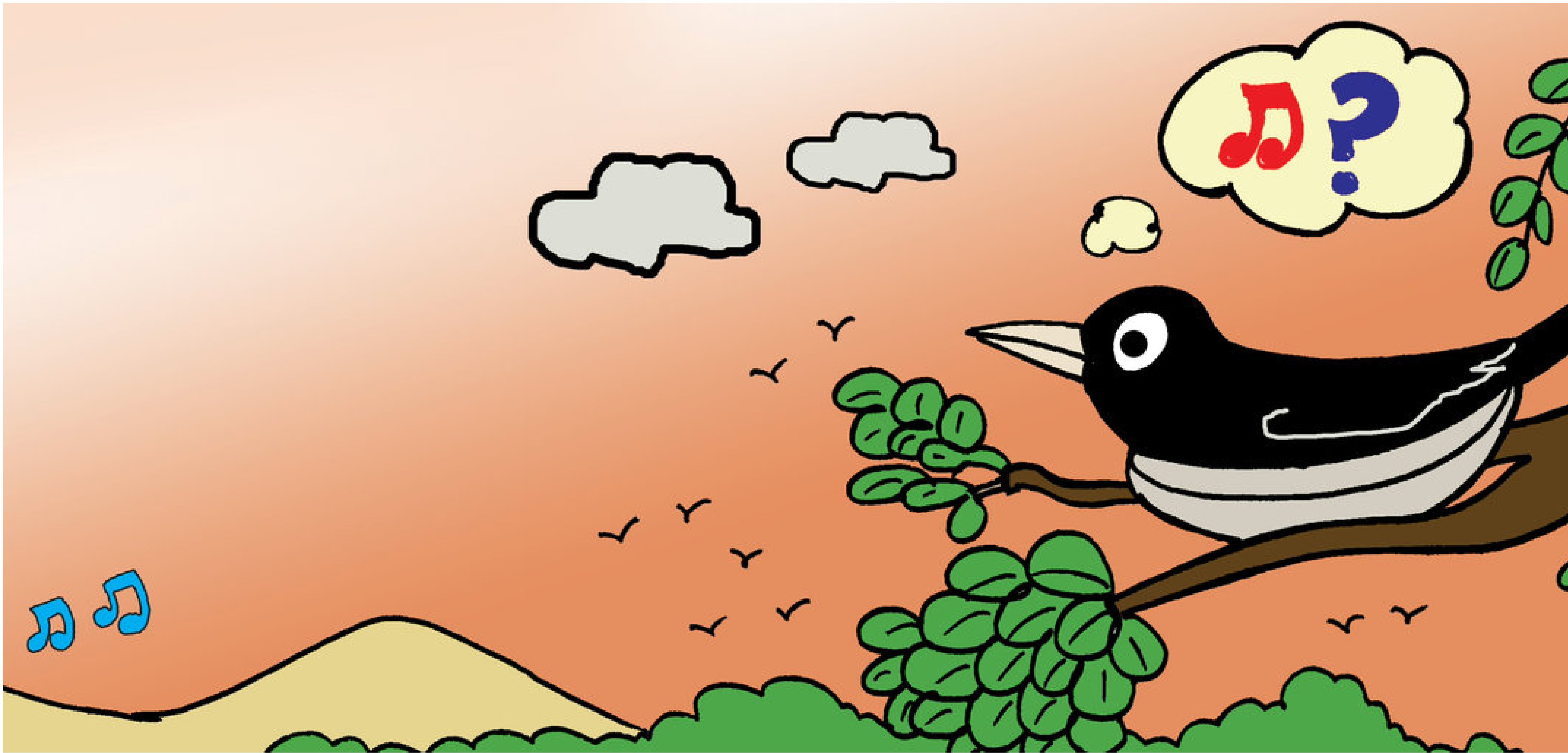
Level 3

The Generous Crow

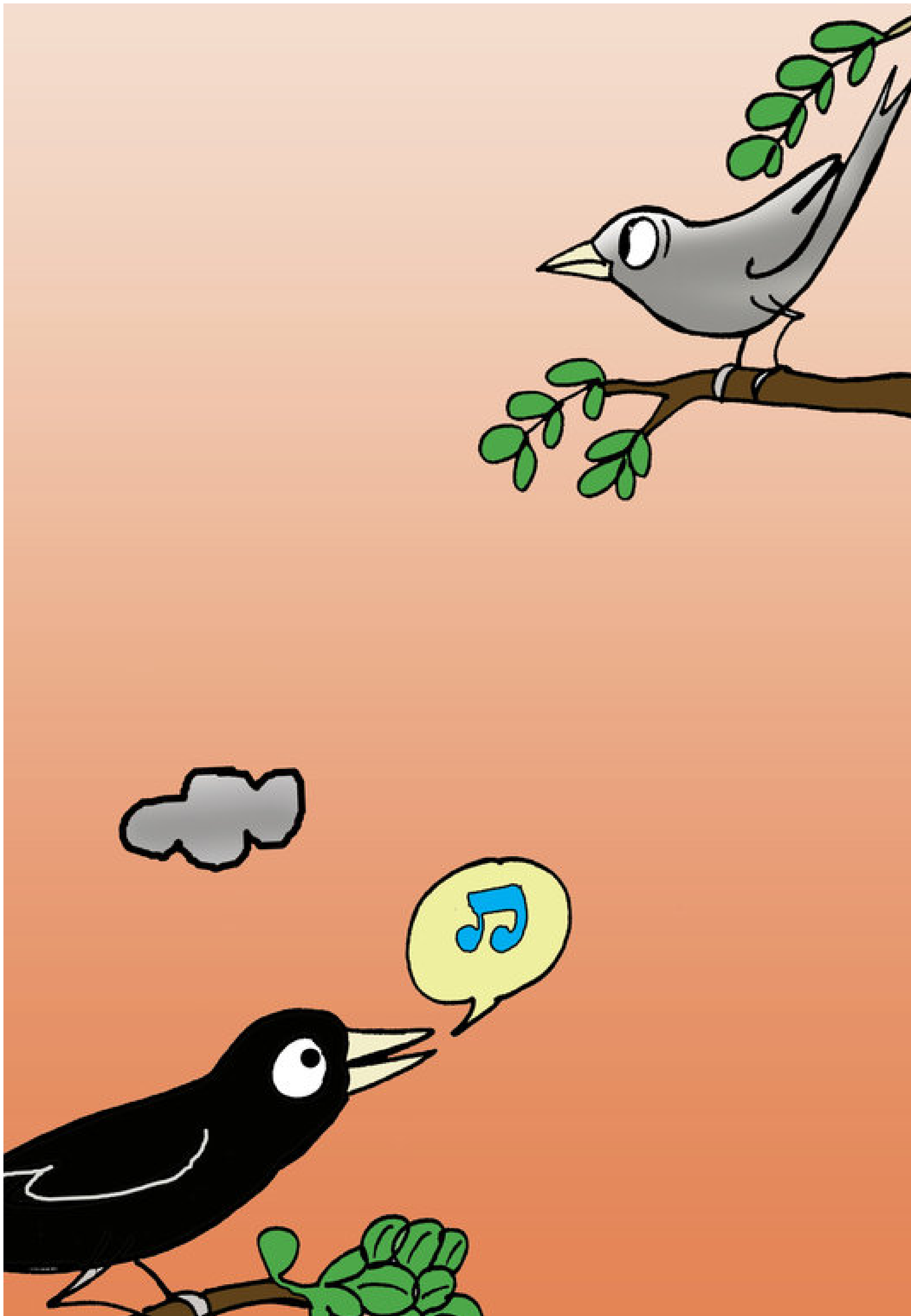
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Illustrator: Padmanabh
Translator: Divaspathy Hegde



It was dawn. In her nest, Kaage the crow woke up and looked around, bored. She cleared her throat and cawed a few times. Bo-ring. Then, suddenly, she pricked up her ears. A koel was singing his sweet song somewhere nearby.



For a while, Kaage enjoyed the song. Then she got mad. It just wasn't fair! It was she who had warmed the egg that the koel had hatched from, and now that little bird was singing so much better than her! But she should not be jealous, she told herself. The thing to do was to take singing lessons from the koel.



Kaage went looking for the koel, and found her at last. The koel looked at her a little suspiciously, but Kaage was very respectful.

“Will you teach me to sing?” Kaage asked humbly.

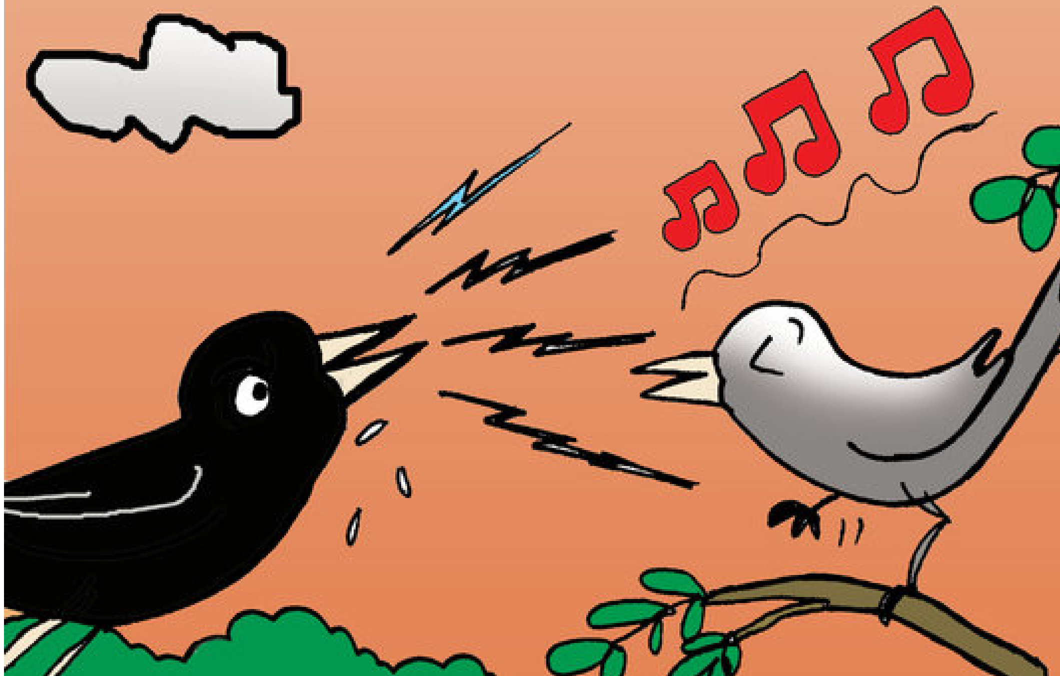
“All right,” said the koel. “But on one condition. You have to be here very early each morning, at daybreak.”

Kaage nodded.

“Good. Class begins tomorrow,” said the koel, flying off on her errands.



Kaage loved her sleep, and never woke up before sunrise. But she had her first singing lesson the next morning at daybreak! She wound up her alarm clock and set it before she went to bed. When the alarm rang, Kaage jumped out of bed, rubbed the sleep out of her eyes, and rushed to class.

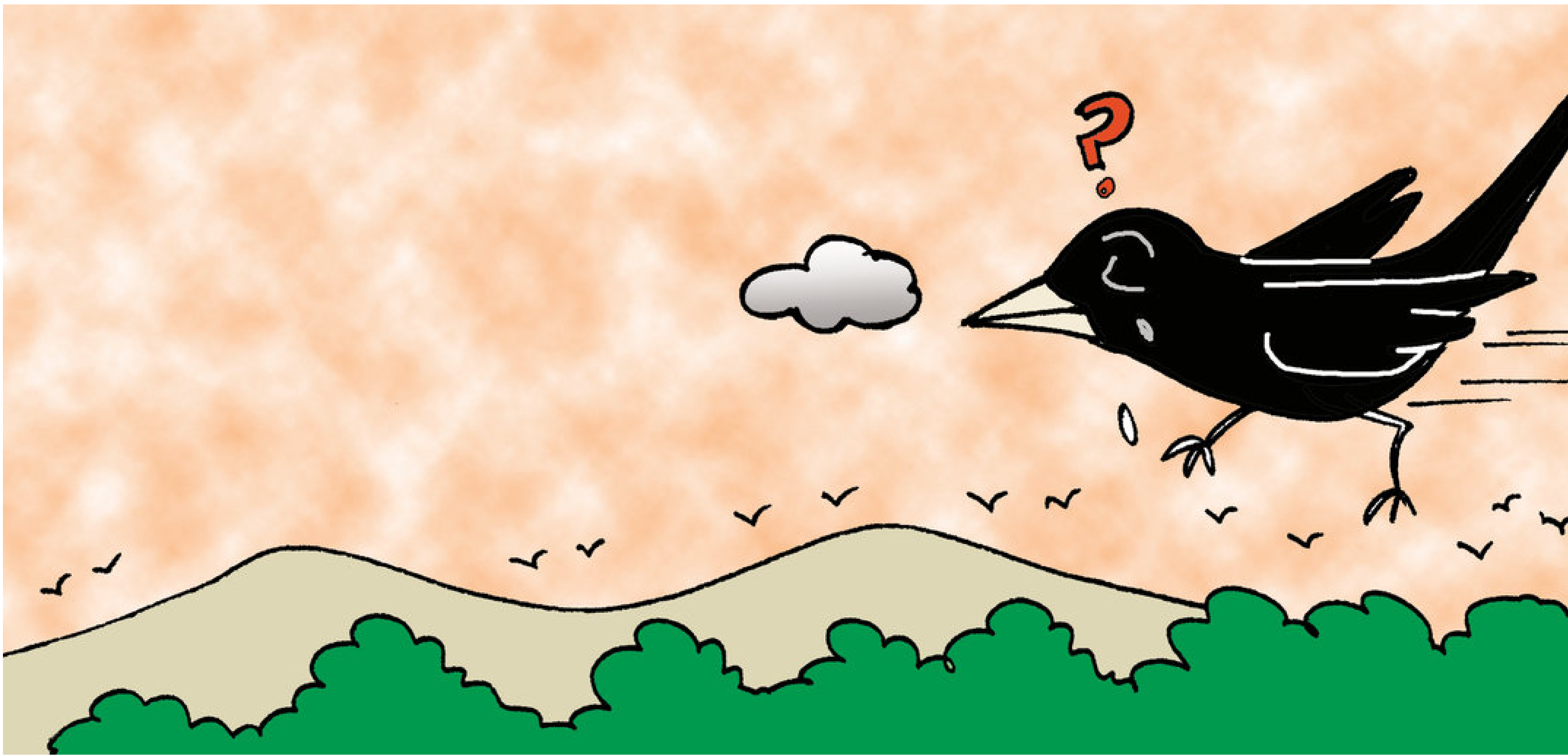


The koel was waiting impatiently. As soon as Kaage landed on a nearby branch, the music lesson began.

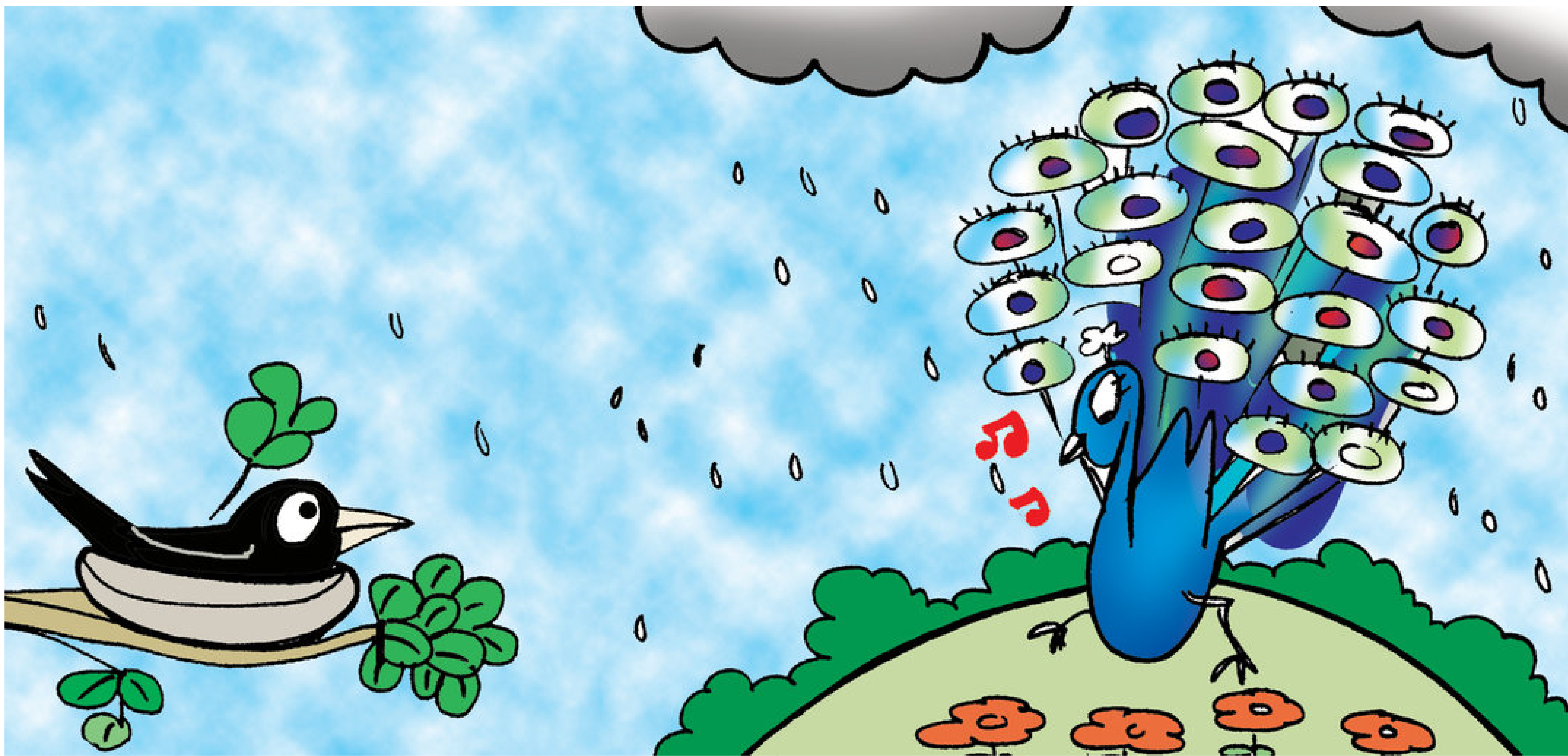
“Now, let me hear you sing this,” said the koel. “Kuhoo, kuhoo…”

Eagerly, Kaage tried. But all she could say was “Kaa, kaa.”

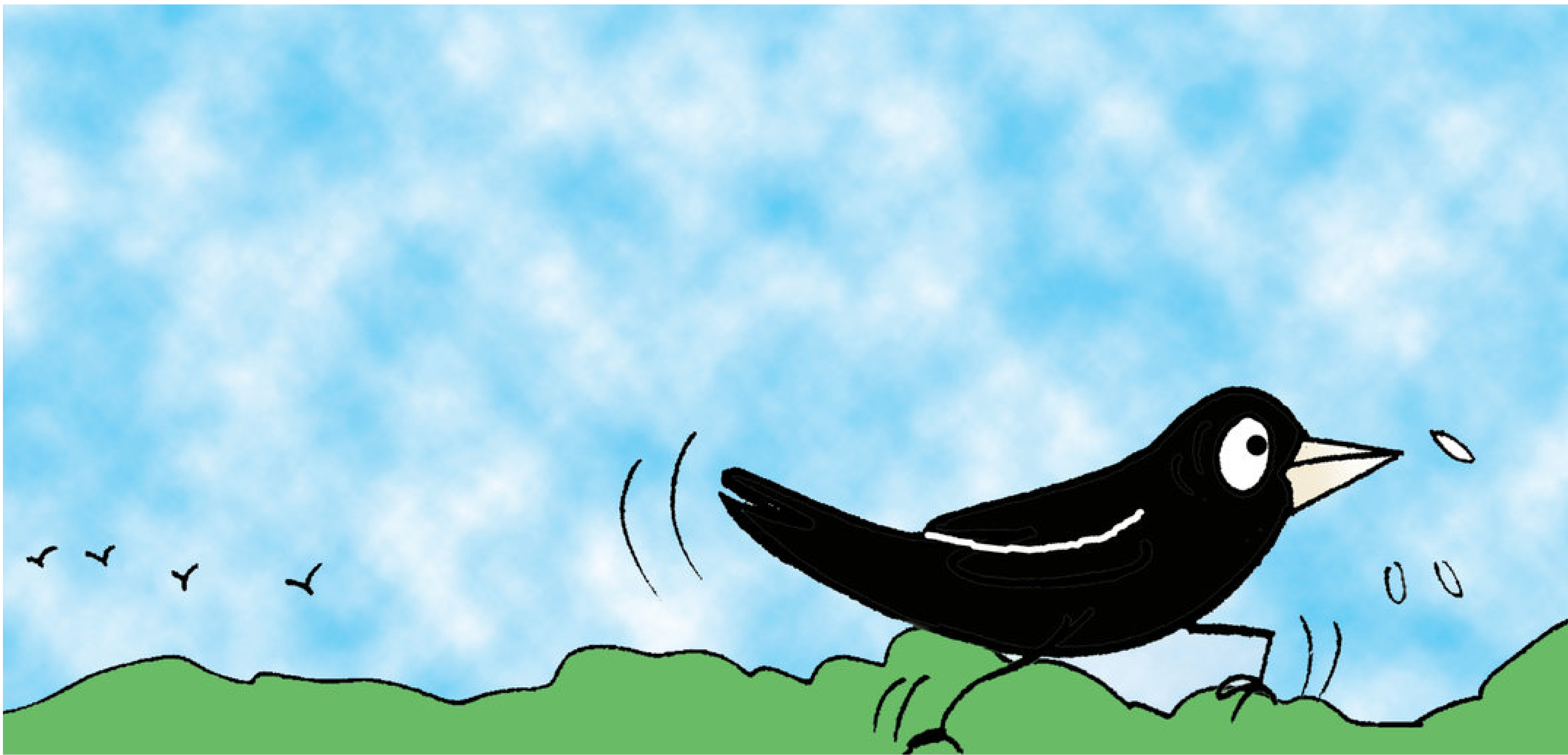
After a while, the koel had had enough. “You are impossible,” she declared. “You will have to find yourself another teacher.” And off she flew.



Kaage was very disappointed. Crying bitter tears, she returned to her nest.



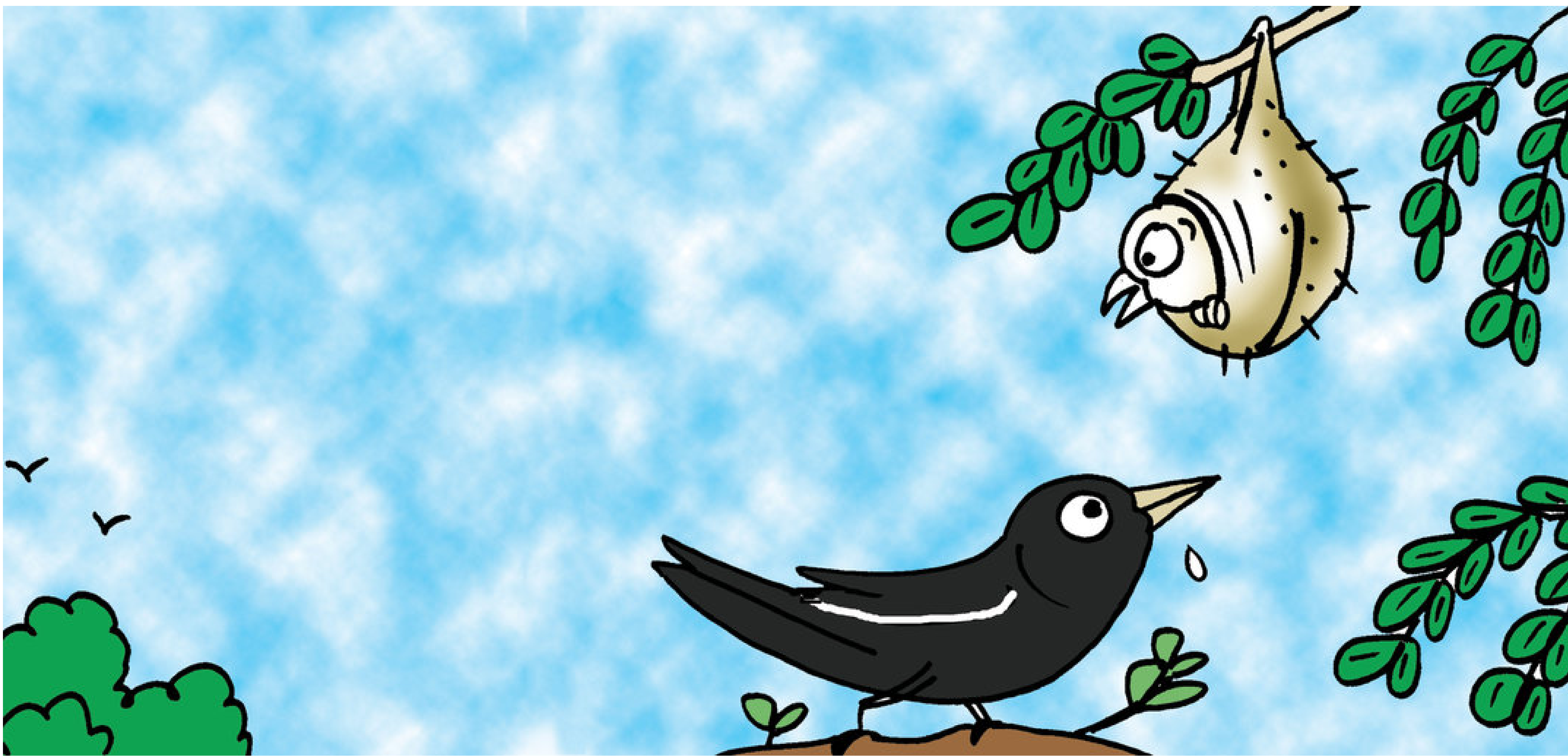
Days passed. One day, Kaage watched as the sky filled with dark clouds. A cool breeze began to blow and it began to drizzle a little. From her nest, Kaage could see the peacock spread his beautiful tail feathers and begin to dance. She was filled with the urge to dance. 'Maybe the peacock can help,' she thought to herself, and flew off to look for him.



“Peacock, will you give me dance lessons?” asked Kaage, when she had found him. “Sure,” said the peacock. “Just do as I do.” Kaage spread her tail feathers. She stepped in time.



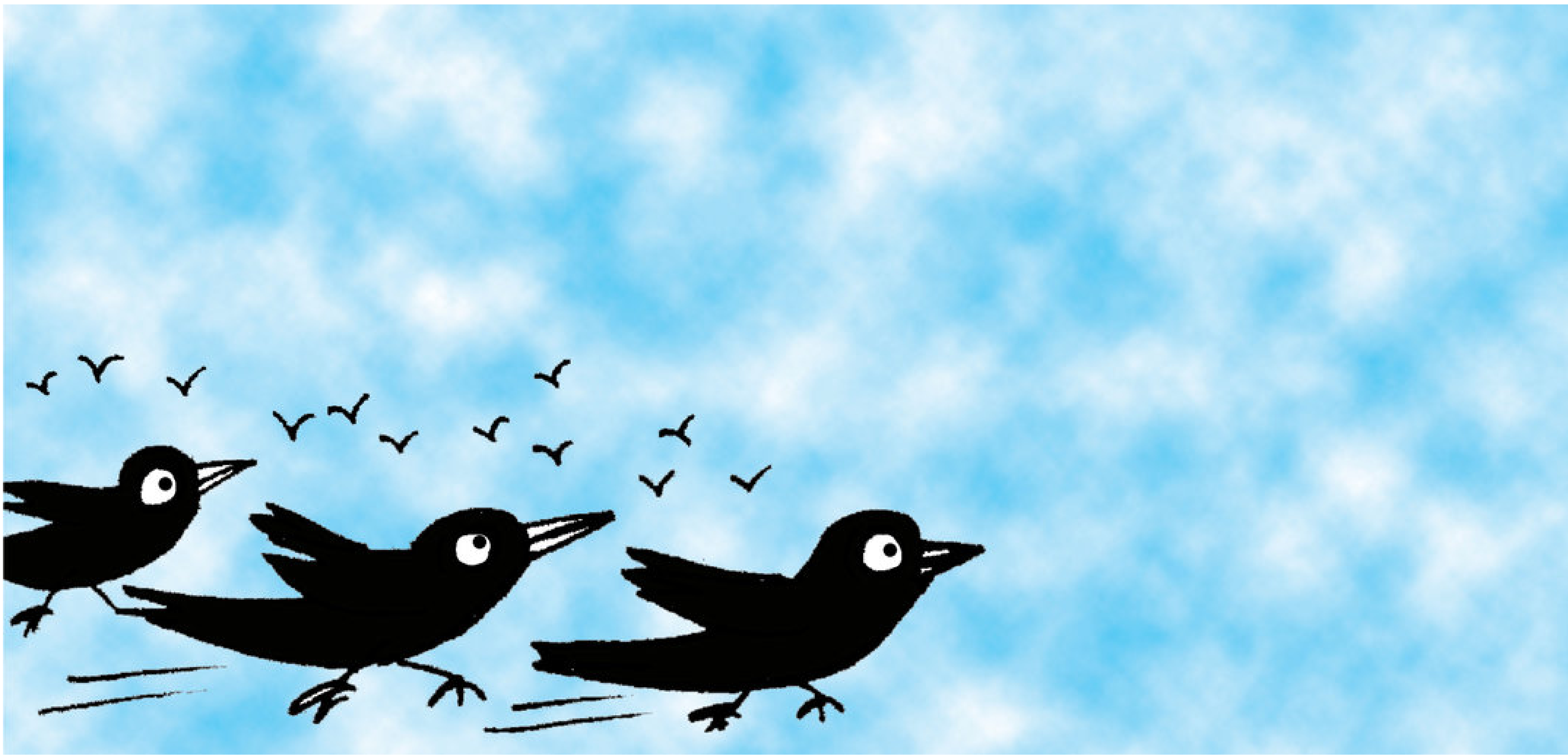
“That isn’t right,” said the peacock. “Watch carefully when I do it.”
Kaage tried again, and again, and again, but never got it right. The peacock was furious.
“You will never learn to dance!” he scolded and flew away.



Kaage was sad. She could not sing, and she could not dance. Maybe she could learn to build a wonderful nest. She went to the sparrow to ask for lessons. But the sparrow wouldn’t hear of it. “You? You will never be able to build a nest like mine,” she said, nose in the air, and sent Kaage away.



Kaage felt very bad. When would she find something that she was good at? Looking down from her nest, she noticed that there was a pile of rice in the backyard of the house below. She began to caw loudly, inviting her family and friends to the feast. All of them ate until they were stuffed.

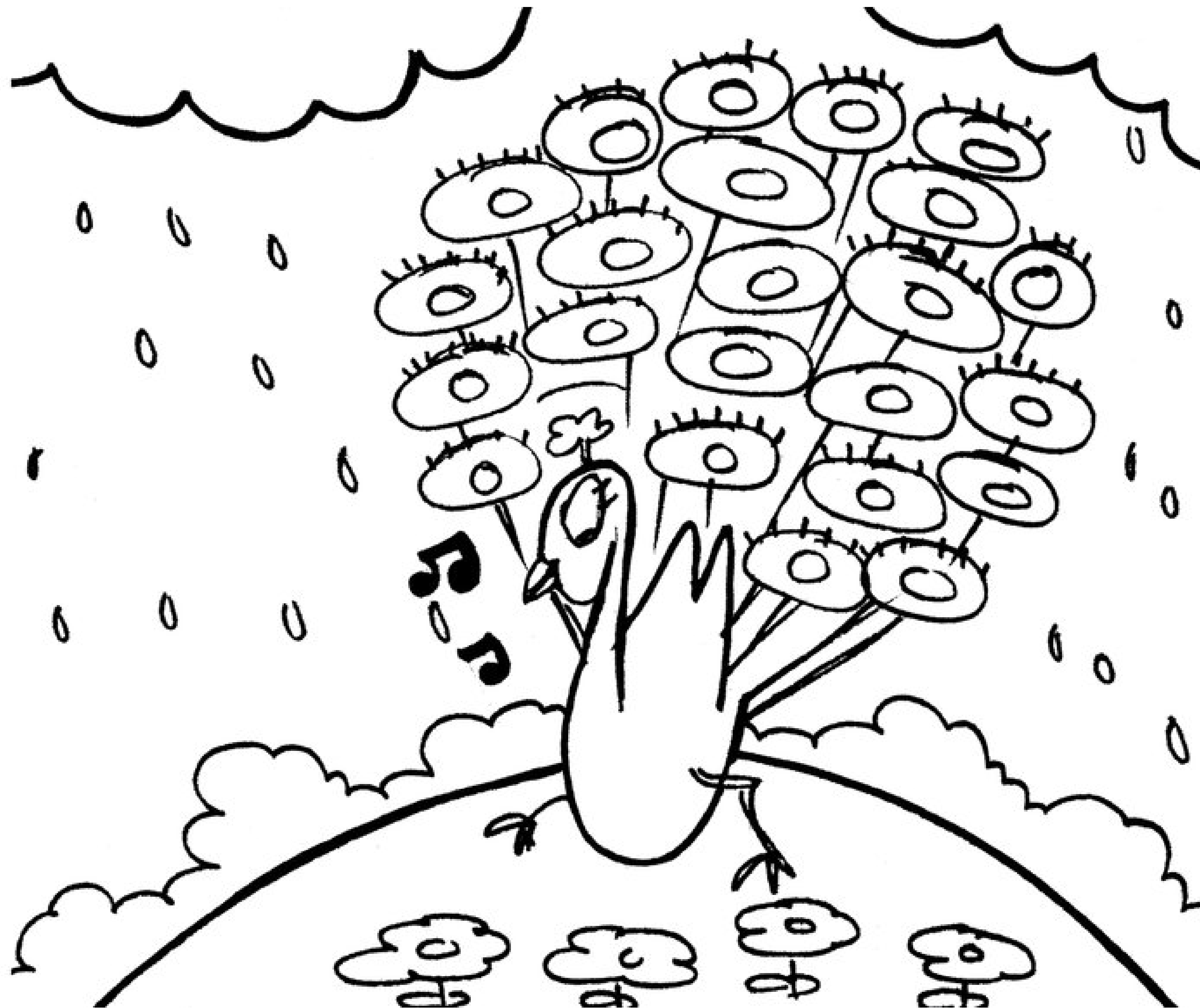


It was then that a thought struck Kaage. All right, so she couldn't sing or dance or build a beautiful nest. But which other bird, when it found food, invited others to share it? Not the koel, not the peacock, and certainly not the sparrow. No bird, in fact, except other crows like her. Kaage was thrilled that she had discovered this for herself.



She was proud that she was part of such a generous family. The other crows saw Kaage looking extremely happy with herself.

“What is it, Kaage? Are you getting married soon?” they teased. Kaage blushed.



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The Generous Crow
(English)

The crow is not beautiful. He can neither sing as sweetly as a cuckoo nor dance as gracefully as a peacock. But he has one unique quality that we can all learn from. Read the book to find out what it is!

This is a Level 3 book for children who are ready to read on their own.

